

# **SONGS OF TWILIGHT**

Translated from the French of

VICTOR HUGO

By George W.M. Reynolds

Author of *The Youthful Imposter*

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Paris: Published at the French, English and American Library.

56 Rue Neuve Saint-Augustin. 1836

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Edited by Stephen Basdeo (2021)



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# SONGS OF TWILIGHT

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY  
Victor Hugo

BY GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS,

Author of "The Youthful Impostor."

## PARIS.

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The front cover of G.W.M. Reynolds's *Songs of Twilight*, published by the French, English, and American Library in 1836.



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## Translator's Preface

In presenting this work to the world, I shall not make its preface a vehicle for the intrusion of elaborate remarks and tedious comment with regard to the poetry of Victor Hugo, on that public whose favour and support I have now again to solicit. Suffice it to say that had I not entertained a favourable idea of the original of these translations, I should not have attempted to contribute to the renown that *Les Chants du Crénuscle* have already acquired. Victor Hugo's talents have been depreciated in England by reviewers and critics—perhaps deservedly so; for when I declare my admiration of them, and my conviction that they are first rate, I merely suggest an opinion, without venturing to question the rectitude of the sentiments of others.

It is necessary to inform my readers that the difficulties, contingent to the translation of French Poetry, are not inconsiderable, either in magnitude, or in number. To have literally rendered many paragraphs in *Les Chants du Crénuscle* would have been impossible. That, which is beautiful in French, is frequently nonsense in English. As an example I adduce the seventh stanza of the Introduction. In French it stands thus:

Les ondes que toi seul, O Dieu! comptes et nommes;  
L'air qui fuit; le caillou par le ruisseau lavé;  
Et tout ce que, chargés des vains projets des hommes,  
*Le soc dit au sillon, et la roue au pavé.*

The literal translation would be:

The waves which thou only, O God! canst count and name;  
The air that flies; the stones washed by the stream;  
And all that, full of the vain projects of men,  
*The ploughshare tells to the furrow, and the wheel to the pavement.*

But I have conveyed the meaning of these lines as follows:

The waves, which thou, O Lord! alone canst still,  
Th' elastic air, the streamlet on its way,  
And all that man projects, or sov'reigns will,  
*Or things inanimate might seem to say.*

Thus I have faithfully adhered to the intentions of the author in penning the above stanza.

The *Youthful Impostor* was vituperated for the freedom with which it was written, and was deemed preposterous. I take this opportunity of acknowledging the justice of the remarks, and of pledging myself to correct those faults, of which better judges than myself find me guilty, in future publications. In offering these concessions, the critics themselves will allow that I partially make, or endeavour to make the *amende honorable*. But for the political sentiments—for the glaring exaggerations of the conquests of Napoleon—and indeed for any of the ideas contained in the *Songs of Twilight* I am not responsible. They are faithfully translated from the original: in changing their language, they have not lost their meaning.

It is but fair to notice, that this volume contains but one half of *Les Chants du Crémuscle*. Should the portion, now presented to the world, meet with a favourable reception, the rest will be shortly published: but should the English taste be sufficiently gratified with these specimens of Victor Hugo's poetry, none will blame me for having kept back that which might have been superfluous.

GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS.  
*Paris.* French, English, and American Library  
55, Rue Neuve Saint-Augustin.

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1836.



## **Victor Hugo's Preface**

The stanzas at the commencement of this volume explain the spirit of the whole. The prelude indicates the nature of the songs.

In the present age, everything, whether ideal or fact, whether connected with society in general, or with a single individual—everything is in a state of twilight. But of what species is that twilight? Oh! who shall solve so profound a mystery—the most sublime of all those that are agitated during times of doubt and uncertainty? Mankind is waiting the event of much that darkens the horizon around us. What else can we say?

As far as regards this work intrinsically, the author will explain no more. Wherefore should he notice the slight communication between this and his other productions? 'Tis ever the same thought in a different language—the same wave elevated by other winds—the same forehead with other wrinkles—the same existence with another date!

But of this enough. The author only suffers personal allusions to remain in his work, because they are analogous with those that are general. He believes not that it is worthwhile to appreciate his motive otherwise: for however that motive be construed, the real one is always to be found in the pages of his book. Still he is very far from considering its contents as an universal development of the human mind: much of those contents is composed of reverie and dream.

The chief aim of the author in the following Poems, and the principal groundwork of their subject, is the representation of that strange predicament of twilight in which the human mind, and society in general, are involved—a mist without, and doubt within—a species of illuminated fog that envelopes us. Hence, in this work, may the reader account for those ebullitions of hope mingled with uncertainty—those tender couplets concluded with others of complaint—that calmness touched with melancholy—those sighs of delight—that feebleness suddenly

reviving—that resigned infelicity—that profound sorrow exciting the very surface of the sea of poetry—those serene contemplations of political tumults—those holy wanderings from public to domestic matters—the dread that all proceed darkly in the world—and then those intervals of joyous and burning hope that the human species yet may bloom to excel! In this book, therefore—small though it be when compared with the vast magnitude of its subject—there are a thousand discrepancies—lustre and obscurity, which pervade all we see, and all we conceive in this age of twilight, which envelope our political theories, our religious opinions, our domestic life, and which are even discovered in the histories we write of others, as well as in those of ourselves.

It barely remains for the author here to add, that he himself, in this age of research and of change, in this epoch when discussion is so violent, so positive, and so profound, that there is scarcely aught to hear, and scarcely aught to comprehend or to applaud, save the words Yes, and No—he himself is neither one of those who believe, nor of those who deny.

He is among them that hope!

Paris, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1835.

# **SONGS OF TWILIGHT**

## INTRODUCTION To the Songs of Twilight

How shall I note thee, line of troubled years.  
Which marks th'existence of our little span?  
One constant twilight in the heav'n appears,  
One constant twilight in the mind of man.

Creed, hope, anticipation, and despair,  
Form but a mingling, as of day and night:  
The globe, surrounded by a fitful air,  
Is all envelop'd in that same twilight.

And thought is deafen'd by the evening breeze;—  
The shepherd's songs, or maiden's in her bower,  
Mix with the rustling of the neighb'ring trees,  
Within whose foliage vegetates a flower.

Yes—all unites!—The wand'ring path, that leads  
Through fields where verdure meets the trav'ller's eye  
The river's margin, crown'd with graceful reeds—  
The chaunt of anthems, echoing to the sky:

The ivy, clust'ring round the ruin'd tower—  
The wind, unwelcome to the pilot's ear—  
The lordly equipage, at midnight hour,  
Led into danger by the charioteer:

The votaries of Satan or of Jove—

The wretched mendicant, absorb'd in woe—  
The din of multitudes, that onward move—  
    The voice of conscience in the heart below:

The waves, which though O Lord! alone can'st still—  
    Th'elastic air—the streamlet on its way—  
And all that man projects, or sov'reigns will,  
    Or things inanimate might seem to say:

The strain of gondoliers in passing by,  
    The lively barks, that o'er the waters bound—  
The trees that life their summits to the sky—  
    The wailing voice, that fills the cots around:

And man, who studies with an aching heart—  
    For now, when smiles are scarcely deem'd sincere,  
In the vain the sceptic bids his doubts depart;  
    Those doubts at length will arguments appear!

Hence reader, know the subject of my song—  
    A mystic age, resembling the twilight's gloom,  
Wherein we smile at births, or bear along,  
    With noiseless steps, a victim to the tomb!

Now vot'ries of the Muses, turn your eyes  
    Unto the East, and say what there appears:  
“Alas!” the voice of Poesy replies,  
    “Mystic's that light between the hemispheres!

“Yes—dread's the mystic light in yonder heaven—  
    “Dread is the light behind the distant hill,

“Like feeble flashes o’er the welkin driven  
“When the far thunder seems as it were still!

“But who can tell if that uncertain glare  
“Be Phoebus self, adorn’d with golden vest;  
“Or if illusions, pregnant in the air,  
“Have drawn our glances to the radiant west?

“Haply the sun-set has deceiv’d the sight—  
“Perchance ‘tis evening, while we wait the morn:  
“Bewilder’d in the mazes of twilight,  
“That lucid sun-set may appear a dawn!”

“Say, Lord!—for thou can’t tell—is that the sun,  
To which all eyes their anxious glances cast?  
Is that th’expected orb they look upon?  
And are those beams the primal, or the last?

Are they, for whom that unknown sun is bright,  
Unborn as yet, or winding on their way?  
Are we, invested in this sad twilight,  
To feel the blessing of its cheering ray?

There is a gentle hum—a murmur’ring sound—  
Is that the wings of them that soon must dwell  
In other realms, amid a space profound?  
Or is it Earth that sorrowing says “Farwell?”

That gentle sound, which falls upon the ear,  
Soft as a breath, and sweet as a lover’s tale—  
Is it the token of an Eden near?

Or is it Earth that gladd'ning sings "All hail?"

The forests rustle—and the birds shrill song  
Re-echoes loudly—and the sounding main  
Mixes with music, as it rolls along,  
And leaves to doubt the motive of the strain!

Oh! In such hours Philosophy may teach  
Calmness but vainly to the soul of man:  
Useless for hoary fanatics to preach  
From ancient books their eyes can scarcely scan.

Alas! For fruitlessly the priest essays  
T'explain the acts of a mysterious heaven:  
Involv'd in doubt are all th'Omniscient's ways—  
The threat is here—but there's the promise given!

Wherefore thus linger on so sad a theme,  
Since Fate, against whose mandates none may strive,  
Carries us on with Time's eternal stream,  
Nor recks for them that die, nor them that live?

But, oh! Within that Eastern quadrature  
What murmur ring sound re-echoes from the skies?  
Will that dread lustre vanish, or endure?  
Will darkness come? or will the morning rise?

And turning towards the East, the poet's ear  
Alike collects the noises that abound—  
The din of multitudes—the sigh of fear—  
The heavenly warnings that re-echo round—

The poet's song, where bitterness is rife,  
Describes them all! all—all is here betray'd—  
The woes, the reveries, the joys of life—  
All—all that passes in this twilight shade!

Paris. October 20. 1835.

## **SONG I: Written After July 1830**

### *I.—I*

Oh! friends of your country, immortal in story,  
Adorn'd with the laurels ye won in the fight;  
When thousands around you fell cover'd with glory,  
Ye turned not away from the enemy's might;  
And ye raised up your banners all tatter'd and torn,  
Like those that your sires had at Austerlitz borne.

2

Ye have rivalled those sires—ye have conquer'd for France—  
The rights of her people from tyrants are sav'd:  
Ye beckon'd to Freedom—ye saw her advance—  
And danger was laugh'd at, and peril was brav'd;  
Then, if they were admir'd who destroy'd the Bastille,  
What for you should not France in her gratitude feel?

3

Ye are worthy your fathers—your souls are the same,  
Ye add to their glory, their pride, and renown;  
Your arms are well nerv'd—ye are noted by Fame  
That the laurel and oak may unite for your crown:  
Your mother—'tis France, who for ever will be  
The mother of heroes, the great, and the free!

E'en England the jealous, and Greece the poetic—  
 All Europe admir'd—and the New Western World  
 Arose to applaud with a heart sympathetic,  
 When it mark'd the French banners of freedom unfurl'd.  
 Three days were sufficient to shake off the chain,  
 And ye prov'd yourselves friends of your country again!

'Twas for you that your ancestors trac'd round the earth  
 The circle of conquest, triumphant and glorious  
 Which, extending to Cairo, from France took its birth,  
 And proceeded through slaughter, but ever victorious:  
 'Twas for you they encounter'd the Muscovite snows,  
 Or in Italy pluck'd for their trophies the rose!

Oh! offspring of heroes, and children of Fame,  
 Applaud the achievements your sires did before you;  
 Extend their renown while ye honour their name,  
 And fight for the banners that proudly wave o'er you:  
 Remember Napoleon has oft cast his eye  
 Through the long serri'd ranks of the French chivalry!

Thou herald of Jupiter! Eagle of France!  
 'Tis thou that hast carri'd our thunder afar;

With thee for a sign did our armies advance—  
With thee as their symbol went they to the war:  
Look around thee—Rejoice! for the sons of thy land  
Are worthy the sires that thou erst didst command!

***II.—8***

Too long by tyrant hand restrain'd,  
Too long in slavery enchain'd,  
Paris awoke—and in his breast,  
Each his ideas at once confess:  
“Vainly may despots now essay  
“To lead a mighty race astray;  
“True to themselves, the French shall bring  
“Such treason home unto the King!

9

“No sooner is the watch-word spoken,  
“Than chain and shackle both are broke:  
“Oh! yes—and in our hearts beneath  
“We laugh at gags between the teeth:—  
“Although the King retir'd may dwell,  
“Silence he never can compel!  
“The flame that burns, is quenched at will—  
“But who a nation's tongue shall still?  
“Immured within his palace wall,  
“The King shall hear the cry of Gaul!

10

“What! all that we have toil’d to gain,  
“And all our sires—must this be vain?  
“The labours of a mighty race  
“To fall before a tyrant’s face!  
“And are the charters of the free  
“Regarded as a reverie  
“By him, whose arbitrary hand  
“Would bind in chains a noble land?  
“Ere half a century be gone,  
“Fair Liberty, thy work’s undone!

11

“Was it for tyrants that we saw  
“Napoleon give the world his law?  
“Was it for Slav’ry’s sons, that he?  
“Upear’d the brand of Victory?  
“Was it a despot’s throne to raise  
“That, like the Greeks of ancient days,  
“Our fathers fought, to gain or die,  
“Braver than Rome’s proud progeny?  
“Or that the cities of the foe  
“Bore witness to his overthrow?

12

Ah! they who, proud of pomp and state,  
Deem that we dread their potentate,  
“They mark not their approaching fate:  
“They tremble not, nor see the gloom  
“That darkly menaces their doom;

“By arrogance and wealth made blind,  
“Onward they rush, nor look behind:  
“The thunders rolls—too late to save,  
“For France has drawn the gleaming glaive!”

### ***III.—13***

And France has awaken from stupor profound,  
And the watch-word has rais'd her champions around;  
And the din of their weapons struck loud on the ear,  
As it hearken'd the tread of the cavalry near.  
But the tyrant has marshall'd his warriors vain,  
And his culverins thunder'd again and again,  
For the stones, that the citizens tore from the street,  
Laid the cohorts of royalty dead at their feet;  
And their numbers increas'd—for they fought to be free—  
And they pour'd on the foe like the waves of the sea;  
While the din of the tocsin, that echo'd on high,  
Was drown'd in the fervour of liberty's cry!

### ***IV.—14***

Three dismal days the battle rag'd—  
Three weary nights the war was wag'd;  
Iena's lance was bathed in gore—  
The banner show'd its eyes no more!  
Vainly the King might reinforce  
His arms with chosen troops of horse—  
To meet a certain overthrow,  
Headlong the royal squadrons go;  
And as they one by one dropt dead,

They seem'd like leaves in autumn shed.

15

Oh! yes—they were conquer'd—but how have you vanquish'd,  
Fair city, the glory of France and the world?  
Three times has the sun set, since lately you languish'd—  
You have fought—you have won—and your banners are  
furl'd!  
And wise were your counsels succeeding the strife,  
Revenge even smil'd with the rest;  
For Clemency bade her surrender the knife,  
Ere 'twas plung'd in the enemy's breast!

16

Ask ye why Paris gain'd the day?—  
Her choicest offspring form'd th'array  
That hurl'd the tyrant from his sky,  
And broke the bonds of Slavery!  
Henceforth, whatever ills await,  
One gen'ral feeling guards the state:  
Oh! let us then the period bless,  
That rais'd us up from nothingness,  
And, casting off our servile chain,  
Proclaim'd us freemen once again!

17

The friends of the monarch with him are o'erthrown—  
'Tis thus that a people its rights will defend;

22

For if Fate have determined the fall of a crown  
The schemes of the council accomplish the end.  
The wretches! they deem'd in their insolent pride,  
That France to their sceptre would bow;  
But the Lord found them light when their balance was tri'd,  
And reduc'd them to what they are now!

18

O Muse! forget not in thy lay  
Those citizens who bore away  
Dread testimony of the fray,  
The ghastly wounds that mark the brave,  
Descending with them to the grave  
Prepar'd in holy Genevieve!  
And while unto his tomb we bring  
The ashes of our slaughter'd King,  
We'll consecrate the trophy high  
Rais'd to Napoleon's memory!

V.—19

And here let me rest for a time to deplore  
The race of old monarchs which now is no more,  
Which exile brought back, and which exile depos'd—  
Oh! yes—let us weep how its grandeur has clos'd  
And e'en let compassion be found in each heart,  
As the last of that race turns away to depart!

20

23

I rent my soul—I remember well—  
When I said to that aged King “Farewell!”  
For I would not insult the old man’s pain,  
As he left with regret his late domain;  
And I dar’d not plant a single thorn  
In the core of a heart already forlorn.

21

Alas! ‘tis sad to linger more  
On the tale of them we may scarce deplore;  
For their fall gave France and her children rest—  
And Exile and Tombs in my lay are blest:  
From the rocks of St. Helen the notes of my song  
Slow and sad to St. Denis shall oft sweep along!

22

And oh! let the lesson for ever remain—  
When we raise up a King, we are forging a chain;  
When we humble our necks to a monarch we make  
A bond that we leave for our children to break;  
Since the breath of a King is the spark to the pan—  
The musket explodes—and its victim is Man!

*VI.—23*

But gay and bright the future seems;  
The Sun breaks forth with golden gleams,  
And bids Tranquillity  
To dwell among the fields of France:

24

Each day yon planet marks shall see  
The sons of Freedom yet more free;  
And ever, till the end of Time,  
That Freedom, in her march sublime,  
Shall with the rapid Ocean's force,  
O'erwhelm th'opponents of her cours.

24

Children of France! the days are gone,  
Since first in flight your fathers shone;  
And they were gen'rous, and were brave,  
And monarchs to the nations gave;  
So that their neighbours round them came  
To share the honours of their name,  
And combat 'neath the standard high,  
Rais'd by Napoleon's chivalry!

25

The blood in you is not more cols  
Than that which through your fathers roll'd;  
Then let each thought and wish be free,  
And all to France must bow the knee.  
Teach them that curse a servile chain,  
To make their tyrant's mandates vain;  
Show them the road that onward lies,  
Where Freedom's temples touch the skies;  
And to that universal shrine  
Pursue, uncheck'd, your course divine!

25

Oh! let th' imagination fly  
 To Science, or to Poesy—  
 Let all pursuits and arts engage  
 The thought and skill of ev'ry age;  
 Still may conviction to each mind  
 A prompt and easy entrance find,  
 Teaching how num'rous ills await  
 The man enthron'd in regal state,  
 And how a hundred thousand tongues  
 Daily proclaim the nation's wrongs.

Now let the fun'r al dirge be said,  
 And let the priests lament the dead:  
 But let them come with modest vest.  
 No more in tinsel splendour drest;  
 No more, with ostentatious air,  
 Need they commence a lofty pray'r;  
 No sign of regal pomp should be  
 Mingled with aught of sanctity:  
 Less welcome to the Lord on high  
 Is grandeur than sincerity!

*VII.—28*

Henceforth to the priest be all splendour unknown,  
 Let his cross be of wood, and his cushion of stone;  
 The Church is his refuge, the Church is his rest—

In her arms he is safe, in her care he is blest:  
For when volcanic eruption is red,  
Like the froth of the wine-press Burgundy fed;  
When the sides of Vesuvius are glowing and bright,  
When Naples re-echoes with cries of affright—  
‘Tis then that the groans of the children resound,  
And mothers despairingly cling to the ground—  
‘Tis then that in vain they expend to the air,  
The half-utter’d words which are meant for a pray’r,  
While the black lines of mist from the crater ascend,  
And seem to foretell that the world’s at an end.  
Those lines have divided—a lustre, that broke  
From the bow’ls of the mount, superseded the smoke:—  
Then, Naples, adieu to the grots in thy vales—  
Adieu to thy ships—the flame spreads to their sails;  
The lava has fall’n on the sides of the hill,  
As the locks of a maiden float wildly at will!

29.

And farther—oh! farther the lava rolls on—  
O’er meadows, o’er streams—to the gulf it has gone:  
The smoke forms a canopy sombre and dread,  
Tho’ the waves of the torrent be glowing and red.  
And the homes of the great—and the paladin’s hall  
Were doom’d in that deluge to totter and fall!  
‘Twas a chaos of ruin! The cinders were strew’d  
O’er a town late so lovely—now shapeless and rude:  
From dwelling to dwelling proceeded th’assail,  
The houses were burning in city and vale;  
The earth was unsteady—the waves of the sea

Boil'd white on the shore—and the tocsin rang free,  
Though no human hand were the cause of the sound—  
'Twas rais'd by the steeples that tottered around!

30.

'Twas a chaos immense! But the arm of the Lord,  
Which scatter'd such ruin and havoc abroad—  
The arm of the Deity, pow'rful to kill,  
And pour out the wrath of the thunder at will—  
That arm, on the brink of the crater, can spare  
The hermit who kneels to his Maker in pray'r!

10 August. 1830.

## **SONG II: Ode to the Column of Napoleon.**

*Written after reading the following paragraph in the Paris Journals;—*

“CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. Numberless petitions requested the intervention of the Chamber, for the purpose of transporting the ashes of Napoleon to a vault beneath the Column in the Place Vendome: but after a short deliberation, the Chamber passed to the order of the day.

October 7. 1830.”

*I.—I.*

On the foundation that his glory laid,  
With indestructible materials made,  
Alike secure from ruin, and from rust,  
Before whose might all monuments are dust,  
Th’ eternal column, tow’ring far on high,  
Presents Napoleon’s throne unto the sky!

2.

Well deem’d the hero, when his sov’reign hand,  
Fatigu’d with war, the lasting trophy plann’d,  
That civil discord would retire in shame  
Before the vast memorial of his name;  
And that the nation would forget to praise

The deeds of those who shone in ancient days.

3.

Around the earth his vet'rans he had led,  
O'er smoking fields encuber'd with the dead,  
And from the presence of that host so true,  
Armies and Kings in wild confusion flew,  
Leaving their pond'rous cannon on the plain,  
A prey to him and his victorious train.

4.

Then, when the fields of France again were trod  
By him , who came triumphant as a God,  
Bearing the spoils of the defeated world  
He came 'mid joyous cries, and flags unfurld,  
Welcome as eagle to her infant brood,  
That waits on mountain-top its daily food.

5.

But he, intent on his stupendous aims,  
Straightway proceeds to where the furnace flames;  
And while his troops, with haste and zealous glow,  
The massive ordnance in the cauldron throw,  
He to the meanest artisan unfolds  
His plans to fix the fashion of the moulds.

6.

Then to the war he led his troops once more,  
And from the foe the palm of conquest bore:  
He drove th'opponent armies from the plain,  
And seiz'd their dread artillery again,  
As good materials for the Column high,  
Built to perpetuate his memory

7.

Such was his task.—The roaring culverin,  
The spur, the sabre, and the mortar's din  
These were his earliest sports, till Egypt gave  
Her lordly Pyramids his smile to save;  
Then, when th'imperial crown adorn'd his brow,  
He rais'd the monument we rev'rence now.

8.

He rais'd that monument!—The grandest age,  
Which e'er th'historian's annals might engage,  
Furnish'd the subject—and the end of time  
Shall boast that emblem of his course sublime,  
Where Rhine and Tyber roll'd in crimson flood,  
And the tall snow-capp'd Alps all trembling stood!

9.

For even as the giant race of old  
Ossa on Pelion, mount on mountain roll'd,

To scale high heaven's tow'rs—so he has made  
His battles serve to help his escalade:  
And thus, to gratify his fancy wild,  
Wagram, Arcole, on Austerlitz were pil'd.

10.

The Sun unveild himself in beauty bright,  
The eyes of all beam'd gladness and delight,  
When, with unruffled visage, thou didst come,  
Hero of France! unto the Place Vendome,  
To mark thy column tow'ring from the ground,  
And the four eagles rang'd the base around.

11.

'Twas then, environ'd by thy warrior's tri'd,  
As erst the Roman's flock'd t'Æmilius' side—  
'Twas then each child—each infant, on whose head  
Six summers scarcely had their radiance shed,  
Murmur'd applause, and clapp'd his little hands,  
And spi'd a father 'midst thy serri'd bands.

12.

Oh! when thou stood'st there, godlike, proud, and great,  
Pond'ring on conquest, majesty, and state  
Who would have thought that e'er the time should be,  
When a base senate could dishonour thee,  
And cavil o'er thine ashes—for Vendome  
At least is worthy to become thy tomb!

*II.—13.*

Giddy sons of France, depart!  
“Wherefore thus impatient seem?  
“Why renew th' eternal theme,  
“The conquests of your Buonaparte?  
“Deem ye that Europe's future doom  
“Depends upon a warrior's tomb  
“The tomb of one that erst has shown  
“The way to fight, till then unknown!  
“Or from the ramparts of some town  
“Your foeman's banner-staff cut down?”

*14.*

Meseems that omens throng on high,  
And dread portents are in the sky,  
Else wherefore, trembling at defeats,  
Do senators totter on their seats?  
The scatter'd pavement of the town  
To make their path is scarce laid down.  
Before such heroes of the state  
Whose ashes should we consecrate?  
And why, strange youths! rush wildly on  
To deify Napoleon?

*15.*

Should we exalt in times like this  
A hero's apotheosis?

Oh ! no—till all that senate high,  
Struck by the hand of death,  
Have gone unto the cemetery,  
The vaulted church beneath,  
In sullen grandeur to be laid  
Where Genevieve's dark tombs are made  
Till then let e'en Napoleon stay,  
Nor dream of funeral array!

*III.—16.*

Thus he, who with his martial host  
Victorious rov'd from coast to coast—  
Before whose armies in the field  
Monarchs would fly, and cities yield—  
And in whose pow'r was Europe's doom—  
His ashes are deni'd a tomb!  
The hand of Death he could not brave;  
In France he has not found a grave,  
Although the palace of the Czar  
Became his booty in the war!

*17.*

England! with thee must e'er remain  
The sad remembrance and the stain:  
Banish'd to save thy dastard fears,  
The royal exile pass'd in tears  
A series of afflicted years:—  
And now the country he ador'd,  
For which he drew the conqu'ring sword,

That country's senate dare deny  
A small—a sorry spot of ground,  
That 'neath the column may be found,  
To form the hero's cemetery!

*IV.—18.*

And, Oh! if patriotic fear,  
Which saw a thousand evils near,  
And not a selfish pride,  
That hest—to dig Napoleon's tomb  
Beneath the column of Vendome—  
That high behest deni'd;  
Or e'en if Liberty had come  
To deprecate a name  
That brought the chiefs of ancient Rome  
Memorially to shame—

*19.*

—But no!—it was not this for Freedom saw  
That she to thrones and empires gave her law;  
And now she forms of Governments the springs,  
As ivy round the stately oak-tree clings:  
Monarchs have fall'n beneath her slightest frown,  
And tyrant Kings before her face sank down!

*20.*

Glory! daughter of our land,  
Hark! your elder sister calls!

You and Freedom, hand in hand ,  
Reign within these city-walls!  
Glory! high thy banner's streaming—  
Liberty! thy beacon's beaming:  
This we bear unto the war  
That will light us from afar;  
But in the splendour of the last  
The former's gorgeous hues are past!

*V.—21.*

And if those senators his tomb deni'd,  
Were they not urg'd by jealousy or pride?  
Did they not tremble at the mighty name  
Of him who bore from Austerlitz his fame,  
And fear lest their illuminations bright  
Before such lustre should repose in night?

22.

Oh! had they brought his ashes on the day  
When Paris mark'd her sons in grand array  
To hurl a tyrant from his lofty throne,  
What fervour through those serri'd ranks had flown!  
What nerve, what vigour might those ashes give,  
The boon of one that's dead to them that live!

23.

If, in succeeding years, the Russian arms  
Around thee, Paris, scatter their alarms,

Those ashes—were they cradled in Vendome  
Would burst to life, and triumph o'er the tomb;  
The sacred dust of majesty and pow'r  
Would form fresh heroes for so dread an hour!

24.

And thou, high monument! beneath thy base  
Some pilgrim haply would have sought the place,  
Where, with respect unfeign'd, his hand might weigh  
The mould'ring particles of man's decay,  
The last few atoms that were left of one  
Who rul'd the world—the great Napoleon!

25.

O Nothingness! with thee henceforth will dwell  
The dust of him that erst was terrible:  
With thee each member, now all shapeless, lies—  
With thee repose a hero's vestigies;  
The knee that never bent to aught below—  
The hand which dealt forth joy, or scatter'd woe.

26.

And in imagination to review  
The arm of strength—the breast to honour true  
The foot which trampled on a world subdu'd  
The eye that aw'd the gazing multitude—  
The noble brow—the loftiness of air—  
The well-form'd bust—where are they now—Oh! where?

Methinks that issuing from the Column come  
 The noise of battle, and the beat of drum,  
 The roar of culverin, the martial strain,  
 The din of war-steeds thund’ring o’er the plain,  
 The sound of fifes, the armies rushing on  
 All this to mind brings Gaul’s insulted son!

Oh! ye base timid Senators, who dare  
 The hero’s empire and estate to share,  
 Still is th’imperial consort unconsol’d;  
 For ye, embarrass’d in pursuits too bold,  
 Shrink from the relics of Napoleon’s clay,  
 And turn contemptibly in fear away!

Noble warrior, keep thy tomb  
 On Saint-Helen’s sea-beat rock:  
 There thou art fall’n—and there thy doom  
 Was like the bursting bomb-shell’s shock.  
 Keep, I say, thy distant isle—  
 Here thy Fortune ceas’d to smile,  
 And grimly frown’d:—  
 There thy shade may calmly sleep,  
 And the drooping willows weep  
 Thy grave around!

There at least may'st thou repose,  
 Far from envy, pride, and hate;  
 While to thy sod the soldier goes,  
 Thy memory to venerate.  
 Coulds't thou raise thyself once more,  
 Thou should'st see unto thy shore  
 Whole navies come,  
 Bearing towards that exile strand  
 Multitudes from ev'ry land,  
 To mark thy tomb!

## VII.—31.

O saint of our land, but our ruler no more,<sup>1</sup>  
 We will yet bear thy bones from that desolate shore;  
 Our eye-lids are moist with the tears we have shed  
 But the tri-colour'd banner waves over our head,  
 And with that for a symbol, as erst with thine own,  
 We will fight till thy foemen are slaughter'd and strown.  
 And then may the rites of thy fun'ral be crown'd  
 By the garlands that we in our wars shall have found;  
 With them we will circle thy coffin, and call  
 The people of Earth to lament for thy fall;  
 And the hymn of the Muse shall flow softly and free,  
 To welcome the presence of young Liberty!—  
 Reposing in glory, with us shalt thou rest;

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<sup>1</sup> The original printed edition here reads ‘mroe’—this is obviously a printing error and has been corrected to ‘more’.

Beneath thine own column thy bones shall be blest;  
The sky as thy curtain of blue shall be spread,  
And the foot of our armies pass over thine head;  
And the crowds shall collect, like the waves of the sea,  
And as they roll onwards, do homage to thee!  
If they keep for their tyrants a dungeon and chain,  
Still their voices shall echo thy praises again;  
And the sound of their wail shall resemble the din  
Of the sea-beaten rock when the tide rushes in;  
And thy spirit shall hover in joy evermore  
Round thy relics brought back from a desolate shore!

9 October 1830.

### **SONG III: Hymn.**

Around the tombs of them that fell  
    Their country's rights to save,  
The songs of crowds admiring swell  
    To eulogize the brave.  
The Patriot's fame will never die:  
    The land, for which he bled,  
Shall cradle it eternally,  
    And venerate the dead!

*Chorus.*

Glory to th'immortal France!  
    Hail! those who fell for her!  
And welcome all that now advance  
    To seek a Patriot's sepulchre.

The morning beams of Phoebus shine  
    Upon the lofty dome,  
That stands above the sacred shrine  
    Where heroes find a tomb!  
Far o'er the city's turrets high  
    That glitt'ring dome appears;—  
Saint Genevieve unto the sky:  
    Her tow'ring summit rears,

*Chorus.*

Glory to th'eternal France!  
    Hail! those who fell for her!  
And welcome all that now advance

To seek a Patriot's sepulchre!

'Tis thus that those, whose bones are laid  
Within that sacred fane,—

'Tis thus in glorious garb array'd,  
Their memories remain.

Each day for them will rise more bright,  
Each day their deeds are told:  
Their names amid the clouds of night  
Can never be enroll'd!

*Chorus.*

Glory to th'immortal France!  
Hail! those who fell for her!  
And welcome all that now advance  
To seek a Patriot's sepulchre.

## **SONG IV: Bridal Festivity.**

The hall is gay with lamp and lustre bright—  
The feast to ev'ry palate gives delight—  
The hungry guests devour the sav'ry food,  
And eat profusely, for the cheer is good!  
And at that table—where the wise are few—  
Both sexes and all ages meet the view;  
The sturdy warrior with a thoughtful face—  
The am'rous youth—the maid replete with grace—  
The prattling infant—and the hoary hair  
Of second childhood's proselytes—are there;  
And the most greedy, in that spacious hall,  
Are e'er the young, or oldest of them all!

Helmet and banner—ornament and crest—  
The Lion rampant—and the jewell'd vest—  
The silver star, that glitter'd fair and bright—  
The arms that told of many a nation's might—  
Th' heraldic blazonry—th' ancestral pride—  
And all mankind could e'er invent beside—  
The wingëd leopard—and the eagle wild—  
All these encircle woman, chief, and child,  
Shine on the carpet underneath their feet,  
Adorn the dishes that contain their meat,  
And hang upon the drap'ry, which around  
Falls from the lofty ceiling to the ground,  
The chamber echoes to the din of them  
Who throng around—each with his diadem—  
Each seated on his throne—each with a wand

Or glittering sceptre in his feeble hand—  
And on each foot—Oh! is the lesson vain?—  
Is fix'd by Fate a manacle and chain:  
Thus hope of flight were futile from that hall—  
And the chief guest was more enslav'd than all!

Th' intoxicating draught that fires the soul—  
All ardent Love who boasts of no controul,  
Form'd of the sexual breath (—an idle name  
Offspring of Fancy and a nervous frame—)  
Pleasure, mad daughter of the darksome Night,  
Whose eye is languid with returning light—  
The gallant huntsman, o'er the fences borne  
By stalworth charger, to the sounding horn—  
The glittering silk—the bed of leaves of rose,  
Made more to please the sight than court repose;  
Where, when your mistress clasps you in her arms,  
No envious vest need hide her budding charms—  
The mighty palaces that raise the sneer  
Of jealous mendicants and wretches near  
The spacious parks, from whence th' horizon blue,  
Beyond the verdant foliage, meets the view;  
Where Superstition still her walk will take,  
And where soft Music echoes o'er the Lake—  
The transient modesty of maids undone—  
The qualms of judges whom small brib'ry won—  
The dread of children, trembling as they play—  
The bliss of monarchs potent in their sway—  
The note of war—the deadly culverin,  
That shakes the fortress with unholy din—  
The serri'd legions rushing to the fight—

The city full of pleasure and delight—  
And all that human kind can form or know  
To have existence on this earth below—  
With Gold—the prize for which ten thousands bait  
A subtle hook, that ever, as they wait,  
Catches a weed, and drags them to their fate:  
Such were the dainties on that table spread,  
Such were the meats whereby those guests were fed.  
A hundred slaves around the chamber stood,  
And serv'd each one with all he thought was good;  
While day and night fell Destiny prepar'd  
The sumptuous banquet thus so largely shar'd!  
And that each guest might learn to suit his taste,  
Beside his chair was Conscience ever plac'd;  
For Conscience' piercing eyes could well detect  
The dainty morsel, and the bad reject,  
Although that self-same Conscience oft be blind,  
When doom'd to stand a monarch's throne behind.

Oh! at that table there be all the great,  
The proud, the mighty—majesty and state:  
Dread Bacchanalian revel! yet how grand,  
Thus to allure the natives of each land!  
Yes—for long shouts of laughter echo round—  
And mirth—and joy—and revelry abound;  
The bowl flows freely—and the wine is bright  
And ev'ry eyeball glistens with delight.

But ah! great God!—While yet your Hebes pour  
Forth in the cups the liquors ye adore—  
While yet, fair guests! the bowl is richly stor'd,

And while fresh dainties reek upon the board—  
And while th'orchestra lifts unto the sky,  
To tuneful harps, the voice of melody  
'Tis now—O Madness!—reckless of the bliss  
That gleams around—in such an hour as this—  
An awful footstep mounts the echoing stair—  
A horrid sound proclaims intruders there—  
A heavy tramp, that bids all mirth be done  
Nearer—more near—who is the dreaded one?

Close not the door!—With haste, and deep-drawn breath,  
The stranger enters—and that stranger's Death!  
With him comes Exile, cloth'd in foreign guise,  
And both with fury flashing from their eyes.

Dread is that sight!—They enter in the hall,  
And cast a gloomy shade upon them all:  
Each guest is stupified with inward fear,  
As death and exile seize their victims near,  
And bear them from the banquet, while their brain  
Seeks to dispel the fumes of wine in vain!

August 1832.

## **SONG V: Napoleon II.**

I—1.

A quarter of a century has gone,  
Since Gallia welcom'd her Napoleon's son:  
The heav'n was low'ring on th'expectant earth,  
Before th'imperial consort gave him birth;  
And kingdoms trembled at the frolics wild,  
Which nature did to welcome valour's child.

2.

Tam'd as the steed which marks his master nigh,  
A prostrate empire waits that progeny—  
The progeny of one whose lasting name  
Transcendant shines above proud Cæsar's fame,  
Whose lips gave laws to Europe's proudest thrones,  
And cover'd half the earth with bleaching bones.

3.

Anon that mighty conqu'rор stood before  
The host which knelt not there but to adore  
And to the prostrate empire show'd his son,  
The glorious offspring of Napoleon,  
While joy and pleasure flash'd in ev'ry eye,  
And shouts redoubling echo'd to the sky.

## 4.

Then, as by magic influence, the breath  
 Of that young child made all as still as death;  
 And Paris quak'd—and steeple, church, and tow'r  
 Shook to the base to rev'rence infant pow'r;  
 And the long cannon, at the palace gate,  
 Bounded and leapt, as they were animate!

## 5.

Elate with pride paternal-holy fire!  
 Before his subjects stood th'enraptur'd sire:  
 His arms, so lately join'd across his breast,  
 Now form'd a cradle for the infant's rest—  
 And that fair infant's eyeballs caught the blaze  
 Which lit the father's in those glorious days .

## 6.

When to a kneeling host he thus had shown  
 The newborn heir of his imperial throne,  
 The ravish'd father mentally review'd;  
 All Europe's kingdoms by himself subdu'd;  
 And, proud as eagle soaring to the sky,  
 "They wait," he said, "for this—my progeny!"

## II.—7.

But who may tell what mysteries lie  
 Conceal'd in thee, Futurity?

Each morning marks some victim's doom;  
Each night frowns o'er a new-made tomb!—  
Futurity! in thee appears  
Th'uncertain glimpse of unborn years—  
Hopes—promises—deceits—and fears—  
    And monarchs' misery:  
Puff'd up with pride, ambition's son  
To ruin rushes blindly on,  
Unstable as the bird upon  
    The forest's tallest tree!

8.

From year to year we wind our toilsome way,  
While myst'ry still enshrouds the future day:  
No human might—no sage's magic spell  
Can bid that future day, its secrets tell;  
But still the spectre, form'd of doubt and dread,  
Attends our steps, and haunts us in our bed.

9.

Tomorrow! what may bring to light  
Thy dawn upon the present night?  
Wilt thou not perfect that which man  
Today in confidence began?  
Tomorrow! like a shadow cast  
Along the ocean's bosom vast—  
Or as a mist upon the blast—  
A cloud that veils yon star—  
Art thou, Tomorrow! curious name,

To which belong disgrace or fame,  
Monarch's renown, and nation's shame,  
Peace, or revolt and war!

10.

Tomorrow—foaming steeds to battle wend,  
Tomorrow—Moscow's flames to heav'n ascend,  
Tomorrow—martial hosts flock o'er the plain,  
Tomorrow—Waterloo is fought in vain,  
Tomorrow—exile marks the hero's doom,  
Tomorrow—see! they bear him to the tomb!

11.

Napoleon! thou in pomp may'st go  
Through conquer'd cities, to and fro;  
Thou, with thy myriads, may'st decide,  
In dismal strife, the battletide;  
Before thee rivers may retreat,  
Victory humble at thy feet,  
And Conquest come thy steps to greet,  
    With music in her train;  
Renown may publish thy return  
From battle—and the trophi'd urn  
With incense fragrantly may burn  
    To welcome thee again:—

12.

Oh! thou may'st rule each kingdom and each state,

Thou canst not change the destiny of fate;  
And all thy might—thy glory—and thy pow'r  
In vain essay to stop thy dying hour:—  
Though thou may'st blast whole armies with thy breath,  
Thou wilt not triumph o'er the shafts of Death!

III.—13.

Such is the will of heav'n!—When Fortune smil'd  
In all her bounty on that infant child—  
When Roman pride was humbled to the boy,  
And Cæsar's diadem became his toy;  
When Gallia's multitudes around him came  
To rev'rence one who bore a hero's name;  
And when his father, in the ranks of war,  
Pursu'd his endless victories afar—  
Then, round the cradle where the infant lay,  
The slaughtered foes were heap'd in grim array—  
When all the world unto its centre shook,  
And empires trembled at Napoleon's look—  
When the glad sire this heritage had won,  
Sceptres and crowns—all destin'd for his son—  
When marble palaces, in grandeur high,  
Were rais'd to lodge the hero's progeny—  
And when delusive Hope unto his ear  
Whisper'd bright promises of grandeur near—  
When she stretched forth the honi'd bowl, his lip  
Essay'd in vain the pois'nous sweets to sip,  
For Austria's angry Genius came between,  
And bore him trembling from the joyous scene!

#### IV.—14.

‘Twas sunset! Perch'd upon the loftiest tree,  
An eagle rul'd the forest's destiny:  
But suddenly he fell—for from behind  
Came with o'er-whelming force the rushing wind;  
And England seized the eagle—and his brood  
For vengeful Austria's maw became the food.

#### 15.

Reader! dost seek to know the warrior's fate?  
Go, ask those Kings, whose prudence and whose hate  
Consign'd the hero to a wretched isle,  
Where joy was heard not—bliss ne'er seen to smile,  
And where—O cursëd doom!—six years were spent,  
Ling'ring and sad, in changeless banishment!

#### 16.

And had he not one single tender tie  
Have lionhearts no soft'ning sympathy?  
Oh! yes—his child—the infant that he lov'd,  
From him so far across the seas remov'd:  
And all he had to soothe what few endure,  
In exile, was that infant's miniature!

#### 17.

By night, when all the bitterness of thought  
His faded greatness to his mem'ry brought—

What did he seek, that thus he turn'd his eye  
Around—about—while sentries, pacing nigh,  
Guarded the actions of the fallen man,  
As though his very sentiments they'd scan:

18.

What did he seek?—Twas not a sad review  
Of all that he had compass'd or pass'd through;—  
Moscow, Marengo, Austerlitz, Arcole,  
The Pyramids, no longer fir'd his soul;  
He scarce remember'd how th'Egyptian fled  
When Cairo's streets were cumber'd with the dead.

19.

What did he seek?—Full twenty years of war—  
Conquest—pursuit—retreat—and mortal jar  
The banner waving in the roaring strife—  
The rush of armies—and the waste of life  
And all that once his fev'rish soul might please—  
Oh! no—his wand'ring eye sought not for these!

20.

That anxious glance hop'd not in exile's hour  
To witness aught of his departed pow'r:  
Madrid, Aboukir, Kremlin, and the sound  
Of martial music echoing far around;  
The gallant warrior, dauntless in the fight—  
Parade at morn—and bivouac at night—

## 21.

All this he reck'd not for. His eye alone  
 Sought him that erst was destin'd for a throne,  
 The little infant who, in frolic mild,  
 Beauteous as blushing morn, had look'd and smild,  
 When first his father caught him to his breast,  
 And felt—let sire's themselves suppose the rest!

## 22.

But vainly sought his eye! St. Helen's shore  
 Reecho'd to his sighs—heard him deplore—  
 And mark'd his misery.—Oh! thou sweet boy,  
 Whose mem'ry gave an exild parent joy,  
 And sooth'd th'acutest sorrows of his breast,  
 May'st thou live on in peace—may'st thou be blest!

## V.—23.

But both are gone!—Great God! that speedy doom  
 Fed with no common food the craving tomb!  
 First fell the chieftain, who the world o'er came:  
 Ten years elaps'd—the relict of his name  
 Was call'd to join his parent—and the grave  
 Conquer'd the child whose sire thou would'st not save!

## 24.

Pride—glory—youth—the tomb has taken them—  
 Nought left behind—no state—no diadem:  
 Death, unrelenting, hurri'd all away—  
 The mighty and the fair return'd to clay;  
 And dumb oblivion from the rolls of fame  
 Sought to efface an everlasting name!

## VI.—25.

Say, Lord! for thou alone canst tell,  
 Where lurks the good invisible  
 Among the waves of discord's sea  
 That ocean all so dark to me!  
 Oppressive to a mighty state,  
 Contention's feuds the people hate—  
 But who dare question that which fate  
     Has order'd to have been?  
 Haply the earthquake, and the roar  
 Of whrilpools, and the dang'rous shore—  
 Haply the foaming deep rolls o'er  
     Fair pearls that lie unseen!

## 26.

Worse than a thousand tempests' force,  
 Quicker than burning levin's course,  
 Internal feuds spread, far and near,  
 Ruin to commoner and peer.—  
 Then wherefore chaunt thy song in vain,

Untimely bard!—In peace remain,  
Nor waste unto the reckless main  
    A verse with ardour warm!  
Thy voice is echo'd by the blast  
Thy music to the wind has past;  
And thou art lonely on the mast,  
    A bird amidst the storm!

27.

That storm redoubles. In the sky  
No spot is of an azure dye;  
Threat'ning and dark the heav'n appears—  
On earth are sorrows, wounds, and tears.  
The seas of civil discord roll—  
Trembles the globe from pole to pole—  
Heroes and monarchs are undone,  
With them Napoleon and his son!  
As yet each wise essay is vain  
To stop the inroads of the main;  
Billows on foaming billows press—  
And all is horror and distress!

August, 1832.

## **SONG VI: Lines written on the Ball at the Hotel-de-Ville**

'Tis thus the civil halls are gay and bright,  
And the vast building shows one glare of light;  
The noise of mirth and revelry resounds,  
Like fairy's melody on haunted grounds.  
But France demands not all that mirth and glee,  
Those shouts prolong'd, and that festivity:  
Paris, strange city form'd of woe and bliss,  
In such an hour requires not scenes like this.

Deaf is the ear of all that glittering crowd  
To sorrow's voice, although its call be loud.  
Better, than waste long hours in idle show,  
To help the indigent, and raise the low—  
To teach the wicked to forsake his way,  
And find th'industrious work from day to day!  
Better to charity those hours afford,  
Which oft are wasted at the festal board!

And, ye—O high-born beauties! in whose soul  
Virtue resides, and Vice has no controul;  
Ye, whom Prosperity forbade to sin,  
So fair without—so chaste, so pure within—  
Whose honour Want ne'er offer'd to betray,  
Whose eyes are joyous, and whose heart is gay;  
Around whose modesty a hundred arms,  
Aided by Pride, protect a thousand charms;  
For you this ball is pregnant with delight,  
As glittering planets cheer the gloomy night:

But, oh! ye wist not, while your souls are glad,  
How millions wander houseless, sick, and sad:  
Hazard has plac'd you in a happy sphere,  
And like your own all other lots appear;  
For blinded by the sun of bliss, your eyes  
Can see no dark horizon to the skies.

Such is the chance of life! Each gallant thane,  
Each prince, each noble, follow in your train:  
They praise your loveliness, and in your ear  
They whisper pleasing things, but insincere:  
Thus, as the moth enamour'd of the light,  
Ye seek those scenes of revelry each night.—  
But as ye hasten thither, did ye know  
What wretches throng the streets through which you go—  
Females, whose vesture glitters in the glare  
Of feeble lamps, stand all expectant there,  
Watching the passing crowd with eager eye,  
Till one their love, their lust, or shame may buy;  
Or with commingling jealousy and rage,  
They mark the progress of your equipage;  
And their deceitful lip essays awhile  
To hide their woe beneath a sickly smile!

May, 1833.

## **SONG VII: Genius of France**

Genius of France, if still thy wing  
O'er Gallia's lands auspicious soar,  
Peace to a weari'd nation bring,  
And let the war-note sound no more.  
The boist'rous passions of the soul  
Keep thou beneath a stern controul,  
And calm tranquillity restore:  
Repel the surge of civil strife,  
Stop the sad waste of human life,  
And banish discord from thy shore!  
Let not the great despise the low,  
The sufferer be more opprest;  
Bid monarchs spare their subject's woe,  
Nor deeper wound the bleeding breast:  
Cast down the gibbet, dry the tears  
Of orphans, and in future years  
Thy guardian bounty will be blest;  
So that amid the dreams of night  
No horrors fill us with affright,  
Nor wake us from a tranquil rest!

August, 1832.

## **SONG VIII: To Canaris**

O Canaris! the poet, in his song,  
Hath haply left untold thy deeds too long:  
But when the tragic actor's part is done,  
When tumult ceases, and when fights are won;  
When heroes perfect that which fates decreed,  
When chieftains mark no more their thousands bleed;  
When they have shone as clouded or as bright  
As fitful meteor in the heav'n at night;  
And when the sycophant no more proclaims  
To staring crowds the glory of their names,  
'Tis then the mem'ries of those warriors die,  
And fall, alas! into obscurity,  
Until the poet—in whose verse alone  
Exists a world—can make their actions known,  
And, in eternal epic measures, show  
They are not yet forgotten here below.

And yet thou art neglected!

All in gloom

Thy glory seems as it had found a tomb:  
No joyous shouts now welcome thee—no cries,  
To mark thy presence, echo to the skies;  
They, whom thy powess rescu'd from the grave,  
Forget to land the chief that once could save!  
There was a time when Gracia's classic strand  
Echo'd thy praises o'er her lovely land;  
And Canaris, half-worshipp'd name! was found

On ev'ry lip, in ev'ry heart around.  
But now how chang'd the scene! On hist'ry's page  
Are told the actions of another age,  
And thine are scarce remember'd. Greece, farewell!  
The world no more thine heroes' deeds will tell—  
Their laurel crowns are faded—in the skies  
Of glory other stars attract our eyes.  
The Press is weari'd, Græcia! with thy name  
That Press, the ruler of, and guide to, Fame;  
That Press, whose pow'r astounded the most sage,  
And keeps on record deeds of ev'ry age;  
That Press, whose principles are ever strange,  
Today so firm—tomorrow bent on change!

But thou art still neglected!

Yet to thee,  
O Canaris, is left the dark blue sea—  
Thy gallant bark, that o'er the waters flies,  
And the bright planet twinkling in yon skies;  
All these remain, with accident and strife,  
Hope, and the pleasures of a roving life,  
Boon Nature's fairest prospects—land and main—  
The prompt departure—the return again—  
The pride of one who laughs at danger near,  
Whose bosom scarcely knows the name of fear,  
Even if warring billows round you press,  
And your tall vessel labours in distress;  
Even if currents urge you towards the rock,  
Or Nature trembles at the thunder-shock;  
Yes—these remain: that ocean oft so fair,

Thine eagles spurning, as they track, the air—  
The Sun in golden beauty ever bright,  
The verdant meadows grateful to the sight—  
Thy language so mellifluously bland,  
Mix'd with sweet idioms from Italia's land,  
As Baia's streams to Samos' waters glide,  
And with them mingle in one placid tide.

Yes—these remain. O Canaris! thine arms,  
The sabre faithful in the war's alarms  
The splendid garb—the yatagan—the vest,  
Expressive of thy rank, to thee still rest!  
And when thy vessels o'er the vast profound,  
To lead thee on to glory, blythely bound,  
At eve the pow'r of beauty may restore  
Smiles to thy lips, and smoothe thy brow once more;  
Or as thy frigate coasts along the strand  
Of that still classic and delicious land,  
As a fond husband, may'st thou see with bliss  
Thy beauteous bride, from Thebes or Salamis,  
On the sea-beach her snowy kerchief wave,  
And raise her voice to heav'n that God may bless the brave!

October, 1832.

## **SONG IX: To Poland**

Alone, beneath the tow'r whence issue forth  
The mandates of the tyrant of the North,  
Poland's sad genius sits, absorb'd in tears,  
Her bosom heaving with a thousand fears:  
Weari'd, cast down, and shatter'd by distress,  
The tomb alone can end her wretchedness  
Alas! the crucifix is all that's left  
To her, of freedom and her sons bereft;  
And on her training robe the marks are seen  
Where Russian armies' scornful feet have been.  
Anon she hears the sounds of clanking arms,  
The foemen come once more to spread alarms;  
And while she weeps against that fortress wall,  
And while fresh horrors ev'ry sense appal,  
To France she slowly turns her glazing eye,  
And humbly seeks for succour ere she die!

September, 1833.

## **SONG X: To the Man who Betrayed a Woman to her Foes**

The ruthless traitor! When for glitt'ring gold  
A high-born lady to her foes he sold,  
The deed involv'd not her disgrace alone,  
But in its sad results proclaim'd his own,  
While the untainted mem'ry of his sire  
Was blacken'd by the nation in its ire,  
And while a justly incens'd people's tongues  
Curs'd him who caus'd a noble lady's wrongs.

Long may the hirelings of the wealthy great,  
Well brib'd for crime,—long may the wretches wait,  
Ere, in the course of unborn years, they see,  
Thou ruthless traitor! one more vile than thee!

And who was he, that thus the weak betray'd?  
Refuse of earth, a grov'lling renegade,  
That call'd not France his parent-land, but bore  
A stranger's name to stigmatize her shore.  
And had not soft'ning pity some controul,  
Apostate Jew! upon thy selfish soul?  
And could'st thou not respect the woes of her  
That erst had many a courtly worshipper?  
And didst thou not reflect, that, if heav'n's will  
A crown refus'd her, 'twas a woman still!

Return to that obscurity, whence thou  
Wast rashly suffer'd to emerge ere now:  
Return to those vile dens—and haste to share

Th' eternal shame of those who gather there,  
And who, for half a century, have fed  
Upon the ruins that their vices spread:—  
Like a plague-bearing mist, may'st thou pass hence  
That men may shun thee as a pestilence!  
And, oh! attempt not to excuse thy crime—  
For thou, accursëd till the end of time,  
Hast bought disgrace, and infamy, and scorn,  
To make thee mourn the hour when thou wast born.

No friend will ope his cottage-door to thee  
But like the fabled Wand'rer shalt thou be;  
And tho' thy wealth, so basely earn'd, command,  
Where'er thou art, the lux'ries of the land,  
Still shalt thou hear the voice of thousands rise,  
To call on thee the vengeance of the skies.

Pursue thy path! And if thou hast no shame,  
Thy gold rewards thee for thy trait'rous name!  
Pursue thy path! And, as a constant guest,  
Will deep remorse thine ev'ry hour molest!  
Pursue thy path! And as the years roll by,  
May public hatred mark thy memory—  
That deathless hate, which like the firtree grows  
Un – check'd by angry storms, or winter's snows.

And, oh! when Death, with all his chilling gloom,  
Shall snatch thee trembling to the dreary tomb  
That tomb, whose very stillness to the sense  
Of man conveys all Death's omnipotence  
When, from this life the last short step past o'er,

Thy spirit flies unto another shore;  
When, from the glitt'ring heap *that* Death shall bear  
Thy quiv'ring form, so idly clinging there  
And when, with giant force, his hand shall throw  
From thine the gold that purchas'd future woe—  
Then, in those depths of horror and of pain  
Where sinners mourn their turpitude in vain  
Those depths, whose secrets Danté whilome saw  
In dreams which struck his inward soul with awe  
There, in those depths, shalt thou for evermore  
The cowardly deed, that stamp'd thy fate, deplore;  
And 'midst the angels fallen from above,  
The most afflicted, shall thy spirit rove,  
Shunn'd by the shades of them that, erst on earth,  
Were branded from the moment of their birth,  
And whose cupidity, like thine, was won  
To wrong the widow, persecute the son,  
And crush the fatherless!

All these will throw  
Insult upon thee in the realms below:—  
Judas, betrayer of his God for gold,  
Leclerc, by whom the leaguer'd town was sold,  
And Louvel, stain'd with blood, from thee shall turn,  
While in their pride, thine outstretch'd hand they spurn.

November, 1832.

## NOTES

### I.

The lordly equipage, at mid-night hour,  
Led into danger by the charioteer.  
(*Prelude* . St. V.)

The original idea is scarcely preserved in these lines; and even if it had been possible literally to have rendered the meaning of the poet, it was unnecessary; as the object of the prelude is simply to connect together a number of natural occurrences, in order to show how all unites in the world, and how one event is dependent upon another. The lines in the original are as follows:

Les chars embarrassés dans les tournans des routes,  
S'accrochant par l'essieu comme nous par l'esprit.

### II.

Now, vot'ries of the Muses, turn your eyes,  
Unto the East, *etc. etc.*

In the month of January last I published two Notices on the *Chants du Crépuscule*, in my Literary Journal, “The Paris Advertiser,” which at that period first emerged from its former insignificance as a simple advertising paper to its present consequence as a literary one. In the second Notice I exemplified, by quoting the stanza to which these remarks are appended, and the six or seven following ones, the truth of

an observation I made in the first critique relative to the obscurity of some portions of Victor Hugo's poetry. Let the reader, therefore, analyze the metaphorical meaning of the sun to which the bard directs his eyes, and the eyes of his brother bards in the said stanzas.

### III.

Prepar'd in holy Genevieve!  
(Song I. St. IV.—18.)

The church of St. Genevieve is now called the Pantheon.

### IV.

Giddy sons of France, depart!  
Wherefore thus impatient seem?  
Why renew, etc.  
(Song II. St. II.—13.)

These words Victor Hugo has, with satirical intent, put into the mouths of the deputies who, refusing to listen to the petition touching the removal of the ashes of Napoleon, proposed the reading of the procès-verbal that indicated the order of the various affairs to be that day discussed: in other words, they moved to pass "to the order of the day."

## V.

The scatter'd pavement of the town,  
To make their path, is scarce laid down .  
(Song II . St, II.—14.)

In the revolution of July, it is well known that the citizens actually tore the stones from the pavement to hurl at the opponent military squadrons. The uncertainty of affairs immediately subsequent to the revolution, is thus metaphorically expressed by the poet:

D'ailleurs le ciel n'est pas tranquille;  
Les soucis ne leur manquent pas;  
L'inégal pavé de la ville  
Fait encor trébucher leurs pas.

## VI.

Noble warrior! keep they tomb  
On St. Helen's sea-beat rock:  
There thou art fall'n—and there thy doom  
Was like the bursting bomb-shell's shock!  
(Song. II. St. VI.—29.)

Some explanation—perhaps, apology—is due for the singularity of the last line of the verses here quoted. That explanation, or that apology, must be sought for in the Original:

Hélas! hélas! garde ta tombe!  
Garde ton rocher écumant,  
Où, t'abattant comme la bombe,

Tu vins tomber, tiède et fumant!

## VII.

The hall is gay with lamp and lustre bright, etc.  
(Song IV—Line 1.)

The whole of this Song, entitled “Bridal Festivity,” is allegorical. The hall represents the world—the banquet is composed of all the luxuries, the pleasures, the attractions, and the ostentatious pomp of life—and the partakers of the feast are the inhabitants of earth.

## VIII.

‘Tis thus the civic halls are gay and bright, etc.  
(Song VI.—Line 1.)

The meaning of this song, which is written “Upon the Ball at the Hotel de Ville,” has no political tendency. It applies as well to any other ball, as to the one it appears to allude to. The object of the poet throughout the Song was merely to introduce a moral, showing how circumstances are frequently the causes of virtue and of vice, without the intervention of man’s moral predilections; and how thousands are pure because they are not compelled by want to commit sin, in the same way that as many are guilty of the most enormous crimes, simply because Fortune, Accident, or Hazard—choose, reader, between the terms—have placed them in a low sphere where wealth is denied, and where indigence is a constant guest.

## IX.

A high-born lady.  
(Song X.—Line 2.)

The Duchess of Berri.

The Political notions of the poet must not be judged by this Song. In condemning the conduct of an individual, who betrayed a woman to her enemies, he does not vituperate the subsequent measures which were necessarily adopted with regard to that noble personage: he simply anathematizes the name of a wretch, whose heart, devoid of all kind feelings of gratitude—of respect—and of pity, was corrupted by gold, and rendered subservient to the designs of his employers.